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ABSTRACT

Public information campaigns have become a staple of contemporary crime prevention efforts. While formal research on such campaigns has been limited, some important lessons may be learned from evaluation of the national "Take a Bite Out of Crime" or "McGruff" crime prevention campaign initiated in 1979. A large-scale formal survey evaluation indicated that McGruff seems to have had some success in promoting various aspects of crime prevention competence among a fairly wide range of citizens. A national survey of 759 crime prevention practitioners revealed that the McGruff campaign has served as a centerpiece for a host of allied preventive efforts at local, statewide, and national levels. A survey of 53 television station public service managers indicated considerable receptivity to the McGruff public service announcements. McGruff's effectiveness may be tied in part to the use of formative research in its design, and to the integration of interpersonal and community-level support with the media components. Subsequent campaigns would do well to pay more attention to the use of theoretical models of communication and persuasion in their design, and should include a more detailed examination of characteristics of audiences. Continuing, systematic evaluation should address the role of news media in campaign dissemination, and examine why some techniques work while others don't. (Forty-four references are attached.) (SR)

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"MCGRUFF" AFTER 10 YEARS:

LESSONS ABOUT CRIME PREVENTION AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

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ABSTRACT: Public information campaigns have become a staple of contemporary crime prevention efforts. Promoting crime prevention poses special problems associated with advocating both self-protective behaviors in general and crime-related ones in particular. While formal research on such campaigns has been limited, some important lessons may be learned from evaluation of the national McGruff effort and a few other documented programs.

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"MCGRUFF" AFTER 10 YEARS:
LESSONS ABOUT CRIME PREVENTION AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

The use of mass media to promote more active citizen involvement in reducing crime has emerged as a major component of criminal justice policy over the past 20 years (cf. Greenberg, 1987; Heinzelmann, 1987; Sacco & Silverman, 1984a). Countless state and community-wide publicity campaigns have been inaugurated, as have such coordinated national efforts as "Take a Bite Out of Crime" and Crime Stoppers. This trend has followed the implementation of a wide range of public information campaigns and other promotional efforts in recent years dealing with various social welfare and health-related topics (cf. Rice & Atkin, in press; Salmon, 1989).

While public information campaigns share common interests in informing and influencing the citizenry, they often go about the job in widely varying ways depending upon: (1) the type of problem or issue being addressed; (2) the specific campaign objectives; (3) the characteristics of their target audiences; and (4) the time and money available for the effort. Most such projects attempt to combine public information or media publicity campaigns with community participation and training activities. Media tend to be more effective at building citizen awareness of an issue, while complex attitudinal or behavioral changes are apt to be accelerated by more direct forms of citizen contact and

intervention.

The development of successful informational and promotional programs in crime prevention and other issue areas remains problematic. Even the more well-wrought efforts depend upon diverse and often scattershot approaches for reaching their audiences. Equally important, the programs are typically difficult to evaluate in terms of having achieved their goals. The criteria for success or failure of these campaigns are often vague. While more formal evaluations are increasing, they tend to be of low order scientific validity. Tight experimental controls are seldom used, largely because of the cost and complexity of implementing them in "naturalistic" field situations. Even when statistically significant findings are obtained under reasonably controlled conditions, questions often arise concerning statistical power and of how many people were actually affected and to what extent, and whether the program was cost and/or effort efficient.

Crime prevention campaigns pose special problems in a number of ways. Crime prevention fits under the umbrella of what Weinstein (1987) calls self-protective behavior. This construct also encompasses anticipatory reactions to many health risks, as well as natural and occupational hazards. Weinstein identifies the key variables in precautionary behaviors as including: (1) beliefs about the probability and severity of the harm; (2) the efficacy of a precautionary action; and (3) the cost of taking action. Persuading people to increase such actions can be

difficult, in part because of complex interactions among the above factors. Also, as Rogers and Storey (1987) note, programs advocating the adoption of behaviors to help "prevent" a possible unpleasant occurrence in the future tend to be less successful than those offering more timely and obvious rewards.

Crime prevention is of course a global concept, much like "health care" or "traffic safety." It encompasses a highly diversified grouping of possible activities aimed at countering a myriad of potential criminal offenses. Most such campaigns wisely center upon a small number of behaviors citizens can take to reduce their risk from a particular type of crime. For example, burglary reduction campaigns typically emphasize surveillant actions (watching one another's homes for intruders) and/or such target-hardening behaviors as securing doors and windows.

Adding to the problem is that the salience of crime and the perceived and actual efficacy of various preventive behaviors varies considerably across social class, geographic locale and other socio-structural boundaries (Greenberg, 1987; O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987a; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1985; Sacco & Silverman, 1984a; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). Such variations can be claimed for health issues and other societal concerns as well, but for crime the differentiations are typically more visible to the average citizen, as well as more readily documented in crime rate statistics. This heterogeneity across citizen groups calls for more careful -- and more effortful -- targeting of messages to specific subgroups for greater effect.

Adding to this difficulty are certain paradoxes and misconceptions in individual reactions to crime. For example, the persons least likely to carry out preventive activities are those in the already least secure areas, i.e. inner city neighborhoods (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981). Similarly, those least fearful of crime are the most likely to become victims, especially of violent crime, i.e. young males (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981). Another noteworthy example is that there is a somewhat popular view of the elderly as being especially victimization-prone group (a belief shared by aged persons themselves), while in fact they are the least targeted age cohort (O'Keefe and Reid-Nash, 1987a).

From the point of view of public policy, citizen-based crime prevention also involves an implicit assumption that crime control is in part the responsibility of the individual, and that individuals are capable of taking actions that will reduce their risk of victimization. There is ample evidence that putting more police and "hardware" on the streets, and meting out more and longer prison sentences, do not effectively reduce overall crime in society as we know it today (cf. Curtis, 1985). More emphasis has recently been put on the ameliorative powers of "neighborhood, family, and jobs" in inhibiting law-breaking tendencies among persons most likely to turn to crime (Curtis, 1987), but even successful programs aimed at such likely will be insufficient for large-scale deterrence (Steele, 1987). Thus, appealing to citizens to be more protective of themselves becomes a third line of defense. And, there is anecdotal as well as

recent empirical evidence that such steps as neighborhood watch programs and other protective measures do reduce victimization rates (cf. Rosenbaum, 1986).

Crime reduction campaigns in general have been particularly marked by lack of formal evaluation. For example, a 1986 survey of 149 crime prevention programs aimed at elderly citizens in urban areas across the U.S. found only six with any empirical evaluative component, and none including control group comparisons or even probability sample survey methodology (O'Keefe and Reid-Nash, 1987a). However, in recent years the effects of a small number of media-based crime prevention programs have been more closely measured, and some generalizations about what can make such campaigns more effective are emerging.

This paper will primarily review significant research on the most wide-ranging, as well as the most evaluated, crime prevention campaign, the "Take a Bite Out of Crime" or "McGruff" endeavor. McGruff is also of more general interest, being the most heavily evaluated PSA-based Advertising Council campaign to date. We will update previously reported findings, and tie those to results of other recent crime prevention campaign studies. Recommendations will follow for the design of more productive crime prevention campaigns, with implications for other public information programs aimed at increasing self-protective behaviors.

THE MCGRUFF CAMPAIGN

The National Crime Prevention Campaign, with its "Take a Bite Out of Crime" theme, was initiated in 1979. It is managed by the National Crime Prevention Coalition and relies on public service announcements produced by the Advertising Council to generate an overall national image and publicity. The media campaign was originally produced under voluntary agreement by the advertising agency of Dancer Fitzgerald Sample (now DFS Dorland), which continues in that role. Equally important are a wide range of supplemental campaign activities promoted at local levels across the country by law enforcement agencies, community groups, and businesses. These include speaker's bureaus, workshops, school programs, and non-media strategies to involve the public. The campaign's trenchcoated "spokesdog," McGruff, over the years perhaps has become as familiar as Smokey the Bear to most children and adults alike.

McGruff's Early Impact

"Take a Bite Out of Crime" was also the first national PSA campaign to undergo a large-scale formal survey evaluation of its impact (O'Keefe, 1985, 1986). A dual approach was used incorporating both a national probability sample survey of 1,200 adults two years into the campaign, and a quasi-experimental panel survey of 426 adults in three representative cities interviewed just prior to the campaign and again two years later. Campaign effects were assessed following a model of citizen crime

prevention competence, or the extent to which exposure to McGruff was related to: (1) awareness of appropriate prevention techniques; (2) positive attitudes toward citizen prevention actions; (3) feeling personally efficacious about preventing crime; (4) personal concern about crime; and (5) taking various crime prevention actions.

The findings indicated that McGruff had a sizable impact during its first two years. Over half of the samples studied recalled seeing at least one of the PSAs, typically via television, and the spots were regarded as well-liked and effective. Nearly a quarter of those exposed in the national sample said they had learned something new, and about half said they had been reminded of things they'd forgotten about crime prevention. Almost half reported more positive attitudes toward citizen involvement in crime prevention, although general concern about crime and sense of personal responsibility were less affected. The taking of specific preventive actions was reported by about a quarter of those exposed. The panel study results confirmed significantly greater action-taking by exposed citizens for behaviors advocated by the campaign, with no change for non-advocated behaviors. These effects were unaltered when such competing variables as exposure to other crime-related media content and direct victimization experience were controlled for.

The findings also supported a view that effects of campaigns do not always follow a traditional persuasion-model hierarchy beginning with learning, working through attitude change and

motivation, and concluding in behavioral change. Rather, it was quite clear in this case that for some persons behavioral change took place independently of cognitive or attitudinal changes. And, cognitive changes did not always appear to precede attitudinal ones. A possible explanation is that predispositions toward victimization risk, direct opportunity for taking action, and issue involvement were partial determinants of the kinds of effects McGruff had on any one group of individuals.

The Continuing Campaign

Most durable advertising themes go through successions of incarnations using fresh individual messages and contexts. McGruff is no exception, with the campaign having evolved through over a half-dozen phases including home security, neighborhood watch, child abduction and drug abuse. A critical ingredient in the campaign's longevity has been the tie-ins with community crime prevention-related organizations. Local practitioners have been able to capitalize on the familiarity of McGruff, and use the more general campaign themes as umbrellas for their own more interpersonally based efforts.

While studies updating the direct impact of McGruff on the general public have unfortunately not been carried out, some smaller-scale research suggests if nothing else a continuing presence of the campaign in the public eye. DFS Dorland has continued focus group and copy-testing research on potential audience groups, including children, prior to new topic phases of

the campaign. A more revealing insight into the effectiveness of McGruff comes from two recent studies of intermediaries between the campaign and the public, professional crime prevention practitioners and television station public service managers responsible for choosing which PSAs are aired (DFSD Research, 1987).

An early 1987 national survey of 759 crime prevention practitioners (a 39 percent response rate), typically law enforcement officers, found widespread support for McGruff as a crimefighting symbol in community prevention programs. Three-fourths of the respondents reported that booklets and pamphlets tied to McGruff circulated throughout their communities, and about half said costumed McGruff characters made personal appearances at shopping malls, parades, and schools. Half also cited McGruff-based advertising appearing in their communities. At the time of the interviews McGruff's tenure in most local programs had been about three to five years, and the longer he had been used, the more positive the perceptions of him.

The vast majority of practitioners said McGruff was an effective spokesperson for all age groups. Most attributed his effectiveness largely to his high recognizability and mass appeal, which they tied to his backing by a national media campaign. The advertising also made their local programs more credible and noteworthy, many said. Most respondents believed McGruff to be particularly effective among children, to whom he appeared as a symbol of trust and security. Many said that

McGruff helped children learn crime prevention steps and safety tips. Almost ninety percent agreed that the PSAs and other McGruff materials aided them in their work, and most called for more publicity and coverage using McGruff. His main perceived weakness was in reaching teens and adults more effectively, but that was cited by only 16 percent of the sample.

Concurrent with the above study, 53 television station public service managers were interviewed (a 33 percent response rate) about their receptivity to the continuing McGruff PSAs. Nearly all regarded McGruff as an effective crime prevention symbol, and most cited his mass appeal and status as a public figure as reasons. DFS Dorland researchers indicate that they believe the McGruff PSAs continued to receive adequate placement by stations because: (1) the spots are high quality, state of the art; (2) the subject matter is of ongoing community concern, and encourages people to be involved; (3) the McGruff messages are easily targeted, as for children's programs, and simplify placement decisions; (4) the spots are part of an ongoing campaign at the national and local levels; and (5) the Advertising Council sponsorship gives additional credibility (DFSD Research, 1987).

Again, while not necessarily indicative of continued public response to the McGruff-based efforts, the above results do suggest that the program has after several years gained a strong identity and presence in both crime prevention and mass media circles.

McGruff's initial and apparent continuing impact can be traced with reasonable speculation to a number of other factors than those mentioned above. For one, at the time of the campaign's early 1980s inception phase crime was often mentioned as the most important issue on the public agenda. McGruff thus did not have to create issue salience, but rather build on it and offer solutions. This is contrasted to, for example, the failure of a 1978 crime prevention campaign in Alberta which Sacco and Silverman (1984b) attribute in part to the low salience of crime at the time among the province's citizenry.

Another factor to consider is the role of pre-campaign formative research in the development of the McGruff character and basic messages and themes. The early studies found audiences to regard McGruff as non-threatening and humorous, yet authoritative. McGruff also was seen as avoiding the more menacing or fear-arousing symbols equated with previous (as well as many present) anti-crime messages. Moreover, McGruff offered positive, and in most cases simple, suggestions that people could readily act on without a great deal of thought or effort.

It is also important to note that McGruff's "handlers" have carefully restricted his usage to crime-related issues, resisting temptations to diffuse his image by relating it to other social problems. Use of the campaign logos, or McGruff himself by doll and toy manufacturers and the like, is rather stringently controlled, leading to a more effective centrality of message.

DIRECTIONS FOR CRIME PREVENTION MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Several attributes of media campaigns found in McGruff and in other recent largely successful efforts can be recommended for consideration in future designs. These include: (1) the above-noted use of formative research; (2) incorporation of appropriate theoretical models into campaign planning; (3) tying media campaigns to interpersonal and community-based programs; (4) using innovative programs with specialized objectives; and (5) being more attentive to the role of news media.

Use of Formative Research in Design and Planning

Campaign effectiveness is apt to be enhanced if greater use is made of basic advertising and marketing research planning principles in their design and execution. This includes using such formative research methods as copy testing and focus group analysis to pretest campaign materials, as has been done for successive stages of McGruff. It also should involve carefully identifying and segmenting audience groups for various message and channel combinations. This concern with responding to audience dispositions is a central tenet of "social marketing" approaches to information campaigns (Solomon, 1981) and can greatly enhance the efficiency of campaign execution (O'Keefe & Reid, in press; Rogers & Storey, 1987).

The crime issue poses special problems in this regard because of its complex nature and the variations in citizen response to it, as noted earlier. For example, in part because

the early research on McGruff found the elderly less impacted by the campaign, a recent large-scale formative research effort has focused on that audience. The National Institute of Justice-sponsored project attempted to describe not only crime-related needs and concerns of elderly persons, but their communication behaviors as well (O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987a). The goal was to use the findings, drawn from a national sample survey of elderly persons, to recommend specific campaign strategies for reaching that group with crime prevention information.

The research uncovered some fairly complex relationships among the aged with respect to their perceptions, and fear, of crime, and what they thought they could do about it. Among the findings with especially high relevance for campaign design was that while realistically seeing themselves less at risk--as victimization statistics suggest, the concerns of the elderly are greater, and they feel less knowledgeable about and responsible for crime prevention than do younger adults.

Recommendations included directing information at the elderly that would try to build their knowledge as well as, importantly, their sense of responsibility and actual involvement in prevention activity. Lower income and less educated elderly were deemed a particularly important audience for certain kinds of messages and media mixes, and elderly women across all socio-economic levels warranted messages tailored and disseminated particularly for them. The study in sum uncovered reasons why the needs of elderly persons were being less attended to by McGruff

and likely other prevention campaigns, and showed possible directions to take to address those shortcomings. Such pre-campaign research could well benefit design and planning for a number of other audiences and topics as well.

Utilizing the above strategic recommendations in the design of successful campaigns also requires application of basic communication planning principles. A wealth of previous research on source, message, and channel factors in influencing audiences provides a substantial resource for campaign planners intent upon matching messages to particular audiences (cf. Percy & Rossiter, 1980; Bogart, 1986; Rice & Atkin, in press). Elements such as source credibility, fear appeals, use of humor, elements of message design, and channel information capacities have all been the subject of considerable research, and many of the findings have implications for media message design. More audience-directed formative research can also present profiles of the mass and interpersonal communication patterns of specific target groups, as well as address their motives for communicating and the kinds of gratifications they seek from doing so (cf. Rosengren, Wenner, & Palmgreen, 1985).

Use of Appropriate Theoretical Models

Campaigns on crime prevention and as other topics appear to stand a better chance of success if they make use of theoretical models of communication or persuasion in their design. At the least, this brings a broader base of knowledge to bear on the

specific problem; moreover, it can provide a guiding structure to better organize the sometimes disparate components of large-scale media-related campaigns (O'Keefe & Reid, in press). The application, for example, of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory in the multi-faceted Stanford Heart Disease Prevention Program (Flora, Maccoby & Farquhar, in press) served to refine the campaign's objectives of reducing heart disease risk by emphasizing modeling behavior and the need for interpersonal reinforcement.

The competence paradigm used to evaluate McGruff, while not incorporated into the campaign's initial design, has allowed a more appropriate delineation of the levels of effects that are possible with subsequent stages of the campaign. Campaign strategists would do well to specify the precise objectives being sought, including such potential outcomes as awareness, information gain, attitude change, motivation and behavior change. These objectives also need to be translated into campaign message components that can be realistically evaluated as the program progresses. Sacco and Silverman (1984b) trace at least part of the failure of the Alberta campaign to a lack of such process specification.

Citizen involvement with an issue may influence the kinds of effects a campaign is able to have. Recognition of this has led to a rethinking of the traditional hierarchical view of persuasion processes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It may be that the "rational" model of persuasion, in which cognitive change leads

to attitudinal change, which then leads to behavioral change, is appropriate only in cases where issue involvement is relatively high (Chaffee & Roser, 1986). In instances of low involvement, behavioral change may occur more simply without a great deal of rationalization or thought, as may have been the case for some audiences of the early McGruff campaign. (For example, getting into the habit of locking a door may for some people not require deliberation as much as just being reminded.)

Combined with communication models should be the use of more definitive theories of how publics regard crime and their own roles in reducing it (cf. Skogan & Maxfield, 1980; Tyler & Lavrakas, 1986). As Heinzelmann (1987) has suggested, it may be appropriate to in some instances borrow from some of the more extensively developed preventive behavior conceptualizations in health-related areas. For example, the health belief model (cf. Janz & Becker, 1984) hypothesizes that individuals are motivated to carry out actions they see as efficacious in lowering the risk of events that they see as having potentially severe consequences. According to the model, the greater the perceived risk and the more serious the threat, the more likely people are to take necessary precautions if they perceive themselves as capable of doing so. Thus, the potential for communication program influence increases when the perceived benefits of taking the suggested action outweigh the costs, i.e., when the sense of efficacy or prevention competence overshadows the doubts.

Media, Interpersonal, and Community Interventions

As Yin (1986) has noted, the most successful crime reduction programs are those involving not just one or two specific actions, but a wide array of complementary and supplementary activities. The findings also make a strong case for the integration of local neighborhood groups with more generalized media campaigns. Small neighborhood self-help groups not only prompt social interaction but also build the kinds of self-confidence that lead to control over one's environment, thereby setting the stage for learning and practicing new behaviors. As our findings suggest, group participation may have particular benefits for the elderly in fighting crime.

In addition, Heinzelmann (1987) has pointed out that citizen involvement in program planning is more likely to occur if done in the context of an existing community network or organizations of citizens who had a history of joint decision-making. Lavrakas (1985) emphasizes that the initiation and subsequent reinforcement of community groups is accelerated by local governmental and police support. Such community authorities at least appear to recognize the value of citizen group action. A 1983 study of criminal justice experts found that such group activity was the most-often mentioned program type believed to actually reduce crime (following opportunity reduction). Significantly, public information programs were the fourth most-often mentioned (Research & Forecasts, 1983).

A critical dimension here may be a need for campaign

planners to project citizens' likely involvement in a combination of communication and action programs. People are unlikely to risk involvement in a public communication campaign and the actions it advocates without some perceived chance of success. As noted above, likely audience involvement in preventing crime can be seen as functions of their beliefs and the likelihood that the advocated actions will reduce or eliminate the vulnerability.

Use of Innovative, Specialized Programs

Apart from full-fledged information campaigns, it is possible for more specialized -- as well as innovative -- media-based preventive efforts to sometimes bear fruit. Media-based programs to more directly involve citizens in at least one form of crime reduction -- tipstering by anonymous witnesses -- appear to have had measured success (Surette, 1984; Rosenbaum, Lurigio & Lavrakas, 1986). Over the past decade hundreds of communities have organized such "Crime Stopper" programs, in which police and news media cooperate to publicize selected unsolved crimes. Witnesses are urged to contact police, under a guarantee of anonymity and with the promise of a cash reward should their information lead to an arrest.

Rosenbaum et al. found law enforcement agencies as well as news executives to be quite enthusiastic about the programs as a cost-effective means of solving troublesome cases, and citizen interest and participation in them seem to warrant their continuation at least for now. They may have the added benefit of

giving citizens-at-large at least a vicarious sense of participation in the process of crime solution. Risks here include the potential for civil liberties violations, and the sometimes unseemly aura of having to pay for what some might see as civic duty. Moreover, the programs are still fresh enough so that it is difficult to predict their long-term viability and impact.

Another innovative experiment has involved local police departments sending newsletters to their constituents. Lavrakas (1986) found citizens positively disposed to receiving the bulk-mailed newsletters, especially if such new information as crime statistics was included. However, exposure rates to the newsletters varied considerably across the communities studied, suggesting that such factors as mailing formats, educational level, and community cohesion can strongly affect the success of such efforts. While immediate effects of the newsletters on reader anti-crime dispositions appeared slight, there was no evidence that the materials increased fear of crime. Such findings reinforce views of Greenberg (1987), Heinzelmann (1987) and others that existing community structure is a critical variable in prevention program design.

The Role of News Media

In many if not most of the communities with Crime Stopper programs, they are presented as legitimate news items or features either in newspapers or on television. Most public information

campaigns attempt at least in part to involve the news media in the dissemination process. Print or televised news stories can lend greater credibility than most other forms of publicity to a campaign's goals. However, the role of news media in campaigns has been at best minimally evaluated.

With respect to crime reporting per se, however, there is evidence that news content exaggerates the quantity and nature of incidents, focusing on the more violent and/or bizarre (Graber, 1980; Gordon and Heath, 1981; Sheley and Ashkins, 1984). However, evidence is mixed as to whether such portrayals have any meaningful impact on perceptions of crime by media audiences. Using national sample data, O'Keefe (1984) found that greater attention to televised crime news correlated with more worry and concern about victimization, particularly when news credibility was high. However, exposure to crime news in newspapers was unrelated to fear or concern, going against previous findings (Gordon & Heath, 1981; Jaehnig, Weaver & Fico, 1981). A subsequent over-time lagged regression analysis suggested it was more likely that increased attention to televised crime news resulted in greater fear, rather than the reverse hypothesis (O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987).

Such differences may stem from variation in the way in which crime-related content is handled journalistically in each medium (an underexplored issue in its own right). Another possible explanation is that televised crime stories are more difficult to selectively avoid or tune out than are newspaper accounts, and

thus are capable of increasing the salience of crime to persons perhaps initially less interested or concerned. Notably, knowledge about and the carrying out of certain preventive activities associated positively with attention to crime stories in newspapers, but not to televised ones. These findings suggest if nothing else a strong interplay between news coverage of crime and public perceptions of it. It may be productive for campaigns to make more effort to incorporate news related to crime prevention into the daily agenda of reported events.

CONCLUSIONS

Media-based public information campaigns have become a staple of contemporary crime prevention efforts. Promoting crime prevention among the public poses special problems associated with both the advocating of self-protective behaviors in general and of crime-related ones in particular. While formal research on such campaigns has been limited, some important lessons may be learned from evaluation of the national McGruff program and the few other documented campaigns.

McGruff seems to have had some success in promoting various aspects of crime prevention competence among a fairly wide range of citizens. Moreover, the campaign has served as a centerpiece for a host of allied preventive efforts at local, statewide and national levels. McGruff's effectiveness may be tied in part to use of formative research in its design, and to the integration of interpersonal and community-level support with the media

components. In addition to these factors, subsequent campaigns would do well to pay more attention to the use of theoretical models of communication and persuasion in their design. A more detailed examination of characteristics of audiences should be included in campaign design. Such innovative programs as Crime Stoppers need a more careful look to determine why they've had the impact they've appeared to. News media can play a critical role in campaign dissemination, and that relationship needs closer study.

Given the ubiquity of crime prevention information campaigns, we need to know more about their direct impact on the public, particularly at the local level. Given the great expense and effort that go into their production and dissemination, the lack of continuing, systematic evaluation may lead to distortion of their impact, and perhaps inefficiency in the communication process. More importantly, the research gap clearly hinders our understanding of why some techniques work while others don't, from the point of view of both information campaigns and citizen-based crime prevention per se.

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